

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A process for the preparation of whole tomatoes ~~whole~~ extracts with lycopene content from 5% to 20% and with reducing sugars content expressed as glucose lower than 1%, comprising the following steps:

- a) pretreating fresh tomatoes, which comprises washing, then cutting or crushing;
- b) heat concentrating of the cut or crushed tomato from step a);
- c) extracting the concentrate from step b) with water-saturated ethyl acetate;
- d) backwashing the extract from step c) with water; and
- e) concentrating the extract to dryness under reduced pressure.

2. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the concentration of the extract according to step e) is carried out to a final volume ranging from 0.10 to 0.28% with respect to the starting volume, further comprising the following steps:

f) filtering and drying [[the]] lycopene precipitated from the concentrate; and optionally suspending lycopene in ethanol or ethyl acetate, then filtering and washing with ethyl acetate until obtaining the desired purity; and
g) adding seed oil to the lycopene from step f).

3. (original) A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the seed oil is tomato seed oil.

4. (original) A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the seed oil is soybean oil.

5. (original) Tomato whole extracts with lycopene content from 5% to 20% and with content in reducing sugars, expressed as glucose, lower than 1% obtainable with the process of claim 1.

6-8. (canceled)

9. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the heat concentrating of step b) is carried out at 40°C to 70°C, so that a weight of the cut or crushed tomatoes will be 20-30% of a starting value.

10. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the heat concentrating of step b) is carried out at 50°C, so that a weight of the cut or crushed tomatoes will be 20-30% of a starting value.

11. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the heat concentrating of step b) is carried out under reduced pressure.

12. (new) A process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the reduced pressure is 20 mBar.

13. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the extracting the concentrate step c) is repeatedly performed with the water-saturated ethyl acetate at a volume ranging from 1.0 to 2.5 times a weight of the concentrate.

14. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the extracting the concentrate step c) is repeatedly performed with the water-saturated ethyl acetate at a volume of 2 times a weight of the concentrate.

15. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the extracting the concentrate step c) is carried out for at least an hour at room temperature shielded from light.

16. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the backwashing step d) is carried out with the water having half a volume of the water-saturated ethyl acetate of step c).

17. (new) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein in step e) the extract is concentrated to a final volume ranging from 0.10% to 0.28% with respect to a starting volume.